

Message Text

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ACTION IO-13

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FM AMEMBASSY DACCA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1810

INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 4398

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PORG, BG, IN

SUBJECT: THE BDG AND THE NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT

REF: (A) DACCA 4102; (B) COLOMBO 3200

1. SUMMARY: THE BDG USED THE COLOMBO NAC TO RAISE BILATERAL PROBLEMS WITH INDIA. ALTHOUGH THE BDG DID NOT ASK FOR DIRECT NAC HELP, IT DECLARED THAT INDIAN INTIMIDATION OF BD WAS CONTRARY TO THE IDEALS OF THE NAM. GENERAL ZIA AND THE DACCA PRESS LAUDED THE NAC AS A GREAT SUCCESS FOR BD, BUT THE MOST TANGIBLE RESULT WAS BD MEMBERSHIP ON THE COORDINATING BUREAU. END SUMMARY.

2. AFTER SOME PRIOR DEBATE AMONG THEMSELVES AS TO WHETHER THEIR MOST SENSITIVE BILATERAL ISSUES SHOULD BE RAISED IN THIS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE, THE BANGLADESH DELEGATION WENT TO THE COLOMBO NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT CONFERENCE WITH THE FIRM INTENTION OF LINKING THE NON-ALIGNED PRINCIPLES OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AND NON-INTERFERENCE TO THE BDG'S PROBLEMS WITH INDIA, SPECIFICALLY BORDER INCIDENTS AND FARAKKA BARRAGE (REFTEL A) GENERAL ZIAUR RAHMAN PRESENTED
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THIS ARGUMENT IN HIS SPEECH AUGUST 13 TO THE PLENSARY

SESSION OF THE FOREIGN MINISTERS CONFERENCE, STRESSING THAT THE NAM SHOULD PROTECT SMALLER NATIONS WHO WERE VICTIMS OF INTERFERENCE IN THEIR INTERNAL AFFAIRS BY BIGGER COUNTRIES.

3. PRESIDENT SAYEM RESTATED THIS THEME DURING HIS AUGUST 18 SPEECH TO THE CONFERENCE, EMPHASIZING THAT "EFFORTS TO EXTEND DOMINATION THROUGH DESTABILISATION OF ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENTS, SUBVERSION, PROMOTION OF INTERNAL UNREST, HOSTILE PROPAGANDA, CREATION OF A SENSE OF INSECURITY THROUGH BORDER PROVOCATIONS AND VIOLATIONS" WERE A "DANGER TO THE INDEPENDENCE AND SOVEREIGNTY" OF ALL NON-ALIGNED NATIONS. HE EVEN LINKED THESE POINTS TO THE ISSUE OF THE INDIAN OCEAN AS A ZONE OF PEACE, WHEN HE REMARKED THAT "WHILE RECOGNIZING THAT OUR AIM CONTINUES TO BE THE ELIMINATION OF GREAT POWER RIVALRY IN THE REGION, IT WOULD BE SELF DEFEATING TO ADVOCATE THE CONCEPT OF A PEACE ZONE WITHOUT LITTORAL COUNTRIES FIRST THEMSELVES RECOGNIZING THE NEED TO RENOUNCE THREAT OR USE OF FORCE AGAINST EACH OTHER." TO THIS END, HE WELCOMED THE MOVE FOR A "CONFERENCE OF LITTORAL AND HINTERLAND STATES" WHICH WOULD "PROVIDE SCOPE FOR DETERMINING ADEQUATE GUARANTEES AND SAFEGUARDS TO ENSURE PEACE AND SECURITY IN THE REGION." TOUCHING ON FARAKKA, SAYEM ADDED THAT "THE QUESTION OF THE RATIONAL USE AND DISTRIBUTION OF SCARCE WATER RESOURCES IS NOT MERELY A BILATERAL PROBLEM. TODAY, IT HAS ASSUMED A GLOBAL DIMENSION." HE STOPPED SHORT OF ASKING ANY DIRECT ASSISTANCE FROM THE NAC ON THE GANGES RIVER PROBLEM.

4. ACCORDING TO THE DACCA PRESS, THE BD DELEGATION WAS UNABLE TO GET A RESOLUTION PASSED CONDEMNING ALLEGED INDIAN ACTIVITIES AGAINST BD. HOWEVER, THEY WERE PARTIALLY SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR QUEST FOR A SEAT ON AN EXPANDED COORDINATING BUREAU, SETTLING FOR SHARING THE THREE-YEAR TERM WITH AFGHANISTAN. THE BD DELEGATION, ACCORDING TO BSS, PRESENTED THE SOLE POSITION PAPER REGARDING THE BUREAU COMPOSITION, SUGGESTING THAT CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO DEMOGRAPHIC AS WELL AS GEOGRAPHICAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS.

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5. UPON THEIR RETURN TO DACCA AUGUST 19, BOTH GENERAL ZIA AND PRESIDENT SAYEM EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE NAC. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, GENERAL ZIA SAID THAT THE "ATTEMPTED DOMINATION OF SMALLER NATIONS BY BIGGER ONES, AN OMINOUS RECENT PHENOMENON IN THIS REGION, CAME UNDER DEVASTATING EXPOSURE AT THE CONFERENCE." HE CLAIMED "MANY COUNTRIES WERE PREPARED TO ASSIST US." IN A MORE SUBDUED MANNER PRESIDENT SAYEM SAID MERELY THAT "WE EXPRESSED OUR POINTS

OF VIEW" AND THEY HAD BEEN "APPRECIATED." COMMENT IN THE DACCA PRESS HAS BEEN UNIVERSALLY ENTHUSIASTIC, CREDITING THEIR DELEGATION WITH SPEAKING FORCEFULLY ABOUT THE DANGER OF EXPANSIONISM ON THE PART OF SOME THIRD WORLD NATIONS, "ZIA'S HURLING" THE "FIRST SALVO" WHICH KEPT THE NAC FROM BEING A FORUM " OF REGIONAL DOMINATION," AND PLAYING A "REVOLUTIONARY" PART AT THE CONFERENCE BY INTRODUCING BILATERAL ISSUES.

6. COMMENT: CONSCIOUS OF HIS DOMESTIC NEED TO MAINTAIN THE IMAGE OF A VIGOROUS AND CONFIDENT LEADER, GENERAL ZIA MAY HAVE BEEN EXCESSIVELY EXPANSIVE IN HIS CLAIM OF GREAT SUPPORT AT THE CONFERENCE. BY CONTRAST, THE MODEST COMMENT FROM PRESIDENT SAYEM, ADMITTEDLY A MORE MODEST MAN, PROBABLY EXPRESSES MORE ACCURATELY THE BD DELEGATION'S ACHIEVEMENTS AT COLOMBO. PUT SIMPLY, BANGLADESH PURSUED THE OPPORTUNITY TO LOBBY ACTIVELY AND, AS COLOMBO REPORTED, TO PRICK THE INDIAN HIDE. AS THE INDIAN HIGH COMMISSIONER OBSERVED TO THE DCM ON AUGUST 23, "THE BDG HAD TO GET CERTAIN IDEAS OFF ITS CHEST AND, ALTHOUGH THEIR IDEAS MAY HAVE COINCIDED WITH THE FEELINGS OF SOME OTHER NON-ALIGNED COUNTRIES, THE BANGLADESHIS SCORED NO SINGLE-HANDED VICTORIES." THE HIGH COMMISSIONER ALSO ADDED "THEIR EFFORTS DID NOT HELP BANGLADESH-INDIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS." BOSTER

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